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**A STUDY OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

by

Gene Runde

A STUDY OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

A Term Paper
Presented in Physical Education 475
Eastern Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Science in Education

by
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July 1961

This paper has been approved as partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree Master of Science in Education.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Athletics contribute significantly to the youth fitness of junior high school boys.¹ In addition to physical fitness, major contributions are made to the moral, social and emotional fitness of youth.² There have been many differences of opinions regarding the interscholastic program of athletics in the junior high school ever since it was first developed. The differences of opinions vary according to the various aspects with which the program is viewed. It is possible that the various opinions are the result of only limited observation, prejudice, or improper information, and have been publicized mainly for conversational purposes.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to study the arguments, pro and con, concerning the interscholastic athletic program at the junior high school level; (2) to examine the types of programs best suited for this age group; and (3) to present a comparative study of two junior high school programs and the success of the individuals in junior high school in relation to their success in senior high school; and (4) to propose a program for interscholastic junior high school athletics.

¹George H. Grover, "National Conference on Fitness of Secondary School Youth," Journal of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, XXX (December, 1959), p. 47-8.

²Ibid., p. 47-8.

Importance of the study. The writer, currently working with an interscholastic athletic program in a junior high school, thought it necessary to investigate the problems involved in the development of a good junior high school athletic program. By obtaining more information about the subject, he believes that he will be able to do a better job, and possibly aid other area teachers in this field who may wish to make use of this study.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Athletics. This term refers to competitive sports involving physical activity among two or more contesting individuals or teams.

Intramural athletics. In this study, the term refers to competitive sports in which all participants are students in the same school.

Interscholastic athletics. This term refers to athletic competition between representatives of two or more schools.

Feeder system. The term, feeder system, means a program of athletics installed in the junior high school for the purpose of building better senior high school teams. Many coaches feel that the earlier the boys learn the basic skills, the better they will perform when they reach high school.

Junior high school. Throughout the report of this study, the term, junior high school, means seventh and eighth grades. Much of the literature reviewed referred to the junior high school as grades seventh, eighth, and ninth. Some of the literature referred to elementary grades consisting of the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Therefore, the writer thought the use of the term junior high school in this study should be clarified.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been said and written about the subject of interscholastic athletic programs in our schools, especially its function in the junior high schools. Many of the well-known educators and medical doctors of this country have expressed their views concerning the subject. While their views disagree on many of the issues that deal with athletic programs, there are also some issues on which they do agree.

I. LITERATURE ON HEALTH ASPECTS

One of the leading criticisms against junior high school interscholastic athletics is that it is harmful to the health of the individuals, whether it be physical or mental health. Mitchell³ states that:

Physiologically, the growing boy is apt to be harmed. He is growing rapidly, but his heart and powers of endurance have not as yet caught up with his increase in size and weight. Left to himself, he will alternate short periods of exertion and rest in his play. Under excessive demands of highly organized competition, he will have to continue beyond the natural limits of his endurance.

Many believe that competitive sports for children under 13 years of age are undesirable. Due to periods of rapid growth

³Elmer D. Mitchell, "The Case Against Interscholastic Athletics in Junior High School," Education Digest, XVII (March, 1952), p. 46-8.

which cause temporary weaknesses and maladjustments, these youths are at a vulnerable age. When bones and joints lack the normal protection of muscles for a time, dislocation and bone injuries are more frequent. According to Reichert,⁴ "By participating in violent exercise, bruising and exhausting activity, the immature heart, lungs and kidneys may be overworked." He also contends that a young athlete may conceal injuries for fear of being called a "sissy" by his friends. Children of the same height and weight may be years apart in physical development, stamina, and judgment. It might be the tallest and heaviest boy that is the most susceptible to injuries.

If youngsters are known to be in good health, and if proper attention is given to their anatomical immaturity, clinical evidence indicates that they will not be harmed physically or emotionally by participation in well-conducted vigorous activity, whether it be within the school or between schools.⁵

In regard to the criticism that interscholastic athletic programs are too strenuous on the heart of the junior high school student, Steinhaus⁶ states that, "There is no evidence that a normal heart may be permanently injured by exercise, no matter how strenuous.

Much of the harm caused by highly competitive athletics is

⁴John L. Reichert, "Competitive Sports Hold Peril for Pre-Teenagers," Science Digest, XLIV (November, 1958), p. 50.

⁵C. L. Wear, "Competitive Sports Below the 10th Grade?" The School Executive, LXXVII (September, 1957), p. 79.

⁶Arthur H. Steinhaus, How to Keep Fit and Like It, (Chicago: Consolidated Book Publishers, Inc., 1943), p. 14.

due to the fact that they are organized on an adult level, with much of the emphasis on advertising, gate receipts and concessions. These contests are really aimed at adults, especially the parents who have a craving for experiences of this nature which were probably missed in their childhood. These programs are not in any way concerned with the welfare of the children. Programs of this nature cannot favorably influence proper growth and development. The children are fortunate if they do not suffer physical and mental harm.

Most participants learn how to protect themselves from bodily harm of falls and minor accidents through preparation for activity in competitive athletics. Injuries resulting from this type of competition are very often exaggerated because they make good news items. Just last year four boys were killed while playing Little League baseball, and newspapers all over the country carried accounts of these stories. Children of this age are killed every day from other accidents but they do not receive national attention.

From the point of view that mental health is harmed by participation in interscholastic athletics on the junior high school level, Mitchell⁷ states the following:

Psychologically, the boy of 11 to 15 years is not yet ready to assume the emotional stress of championship competition. It is better mental hygiene for these young participants to play their beginning games in situations where they can develop skills and team play without being subjected to undue nervous strain with resulting emotional impairment.

Making a mistake in the crucial moment of a big ball game

⁷Mitchell, Op. Cit., p. 46-8.

may cause a boy to receive severe criticism from his friends and possibly from adults. If this would happen, it might have a lasting effect on the individual. High pressure competition of this nature may lead to strong emotional reactions which may effect future emotional and social development.

In contrast to the above view, many educators believe that competitive athletics help individuals to improve their mental alertness, and that it helps to prepare the individuals for the competition they meet in everyday life.⁸ It is possible that if athletic programs are not carried on by the school, outside organizations will do so. The schools are much better equipped with facilities, teachers and supervisors than any other group in the community.

According to Archer,⁹ many physicians and educators contend that an essential of a healthy nation is the development of stamina, physical fitness and teamwork.

In general, physicians and educators agree on the real value of properly conducted athletic programs. Not only are these activities an aid to physical development, but they also offer a fine opportunity to teach sportsmanship, cooperation, loyalty, leadership, self-discipline, and many other worthwhile qualities.¹⁰ They also contend

⁸Ruth and Edward Breiher, "Which Way to Physical Fitness," Parents Magazine, XXXIV (March, 1959), p. 46-7, 109-113.

⁹John K. Archer, "Toward Sane Athletic Programs," NEA Journal, XXXIX (May, 1950), p. 348-9.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 348-9.

that athletics should do as much as possible for many students rather than for just a few who are fortunate in making the first team.

Athletics provide a medium through which the individual may learn to control his emotions. At the junior high school level, it is true that interscholastic athletics tend to accentuate the mental and emotional reactions of the student. However, emotional crises are going to appear at any age and in many different circumstances, and thus it seems athletics will do more good than it could possibly do harm.¹¹

After years of careful investigation, the major points advanced by the opponents of highly competitive athletics for boys of junior high-school age are as follows:

1. Boys of junior high-school age are growing and developing at an accelerated rate and consequently are particularly susceptible to injuries of the bones and the joints. The stresses and the strains associated with participation in interscholastic athletics are too severe for the junior high-school youngsters. Such participation may result in injuries that are not immediately apparent, but that may cause trouble in later life.
2. Boys of junior high-school age vary widely in respect to height, weight, and physiological maturity. Unless the boys are matched on an equitable basis, competition in body-contact sports may be dangerous. Such matching is a difficult task, not likely to be accomplished by the average physical education teacher or coach.
3. The strenuous exercise that accompanies participation in interscholastic athletics may have deleterious effects on the hearts of rapidly growing boys. The single stethoscopic examination to which an athlete is normally subjected is not infallible in determining whether or not the heart of the boy might be damaged by strenuous exercise.

¹¹G. E. Shepard and R. E. Jamerson, Interscholastic Athletics, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1953), p. 236.

4. Participation in interscholastic athletics may, particularly with reference to height, interfere with the normal growth pattern of junior high-school boys.
5. High-pressure competition may lead to strong emotional reactions in youngsters, which reactions may adversely affect emotional and social development.¹²

In rebuttal to the objections listed above, the proponents of interscholastic athletics in junior high schools present the following arguments:

1. Preadolescent and adolescent boys are growing, developing organisms; and injuries do occur in programs of athletics for this age group. However, there is no evidence that boys are injured more frequently or more seriously in well-organized and well-conducted programs of athletics in junior high schools than in such programs in senior high schools. In spite of the danger of injuries, boys will participate in sports whether the school sponsors the sports or not. If the schools do not provide opportunities for the boys to play under controlled conditions -- with adequate protective equipment and under the supervision of competent instructors -- the boys will, in their free time, play under conditions that are much more dangerous than those in school-sponsored programs. Also, if the schools do not sponsor competitive athletics for youngsters, outside agencies that have special interests to promote will organize and sponsor these activities. Often such agencies must depend on volunteer leaders who may have but few of the qualifications necessary for conducting programs of athletics in a safe and in an educational manner.
2. Admittedly, boys of junior high-school age vary widely in respect to height, weight, and physiological maturity. However, studies have shown rather conclusively that the boys who succeed in athletics are boys, who, in terms of height, weight, and (or) physiological maturity, are advanced for their ages. These boys will comprise the interscholastic team in any given school and, to some degree, will be protected

¹²Louis E. Alley, "Interscholastic Athletics for Junior High School Boys," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLIV (May, 1960), p. 96-7.

from injury because of their advanced physiological maturity.

3. The view that the normal heart may be injured by excessive exercise is not shared by a number of medical authorities who hold that the inability of the body to meet the demands of the exercise will cause the person to diminish or cease the exercise before the normal heart is placed in jeopardy because of excessive strain.
4. The evidence purported to indicate that participation in interscholastic athletics interferes with the normal growth pattern of junior high-school boys is sparse and unconvulsive. The deviation from normal that is reflected in the growth patterns of junior high-school athletes is probably due to the fact that these boys are, in respect to growth and maturity, advanced for their ages.
5. Rather than adversely affecting emotional and social development, participation in competition of the nature usually provided in junior high-school programs of athletics fosters emotional control and desirable social development. Youngsters who participate in athletic programs gain confidence in themselves and obtain added recognition from their peers.¹³

II. LITERATURE CONCERNING THE PROGRAMS

In recent years, junior high school interscholastic athletics have been increasing widely.¹⁴ Along with this increase comes many new and different ideas concerning programs of this nature. It seems that each individual has one or more opinions on the subject. As a result, each school usually has a program depending on how the local school board and the high school coaches see the situation.

¹³Ibid., p. 97-8.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 96.

Some might believe that the junior high school must be used as a feeder system for high school teams. Others might go along with the idea of intramurals in which every one has a chance to participate. Still others might see the need for a combination of these two which would include only a modest schedule of interscholastic competition.

Interscholastic Athletic Programs. Interscholastic athletic programs began in junior high schools mainly through pressures put on high school coaches to produce winning teams. These coaches believed that their success was determined a few years before their material reached them, and thus the junior high-school athletic program could be a stepping stone to the senior high-school program. Because of this some basketball programs today resemble major league baseball farm systems. Coaches have introduced basketball as early as possible through league levels such as biddy basketball, and junior high school basketball.

It must be understood that the general public is noted for its strong competitive spirit and as long as the public attends athletic contests there will be pressures brought to bear to improve the chances of winning. Knowing that his future depends upon winning teams, the coach will put excessive pressure on himself and the athletes to the neglect of other aspects of the program. When the public uses as its main criteria of a successful coach the number of games he wins, then it must follow that the coach will make winning his ultimate goal no matter what effect it may have upon

others. Such a belief is, however, certainly contrary to sound educational philosophy.¹⁵

Some educators advocate competitive athletics for boys of junior high school age as one means of furthering their educational opportunities. Many administrators also had experiences as coaches at this level and recognize that under proper control and supervision, this part of the student's life contributes much to his general welfare.

There are others who actually believe in programs of interscholastic athletics, but object to them because of the cost involved. They claim that it runs the expenses too high to pay a coach, buy uniforms and equipment, pay for transportation and other miscellaneous needs. In reply to this objection, many people say that gate receipts received from the games will cut the expense greatly and in some cases, a profit may be realized on the program. This attitude, however, is also contrary to sound educational philosophy.¹⁶

Proponents of the interscholastic athletic programs believe that it is a part of our culture. In just about everything a person does today, there is some form of competition involved, whether direct or indirect. Ruth and Edward Brecher¹⁷ make the following statement on competition in our country:

¹⁵Robert J. Weber, "Public Pressures and Their Effect on Athletics," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, XLIV, (May 1960), p. 103-5.

¹⁶"Interscholastic Athletics," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, XXXVII, (May 1953), p. 106-108.

¹⁷Brecherd, Op. Cit., p. 46-7, 109-13.

Ours is a highly competitive society and it is natural that some of our children's activity should be channeled into competitive sports. Children love to win individually and they love to belong to the winning team. The roots of our nationally publicized competitive sports events lie so deep in American culture that everyone is aware of their benefits and advantages.

Critics of interscholastic athletics believe that concentrating attention on one team is a bad policy. They believe that the boys who will do most of the playing are those that are physically more mature than his classmates, and thus a large majority of students are not included in the program.¹⁸

The overemphasis on winning is another aspect on which the program receives criticism. This could be the fault of the coach and administration. The coach might believe that a winning team will lead to a better job for himself. He may have learned through experience that the best way to retain his present job is to have a winning team. A good administrator will see that this does not happen. According to Martain:¹⁹

Interscholar athletics could be educational and fun if the need to win were soft-pedalled; coaches were more pleasant, patient, and understanding, more players got in the game; and less time were spent on practice sessions.

The spirit of competition and the desire to win are inherent in the American people; thus, we can always expect varying degrees of public pressure upon the athletic program. If the administrators work in conjunction with the coaches in identifying

¹⁸Alley, Op. Cit., p. 96-7.

¹⁹Michael Martain, "We Have to Win," NEA Journal, XLIII (October, 1953), p. 420.

pressure groups, analyzing their effects on athletics, and deciding on the appropriate action, then the undesirable effects on athletics can be limited, if not eliminated.²⁰

Intramurals. Proponents of intramurals for boys of this age say that all boys should have the opportunity to participate and not only the few who make the first team. Zaleski²¹ states that, "If intramural competition should replace interscholastic competition, a far greater number of pupils would benefit by the same expenditure of money, time, and talent." Intramurals give more students a chance to play, to have more interests and to improve their skills. Usually a boy can satisfy his desire for competition in a properly conducted intramural program.

Authorities in the field of physical education agree that a good intramural program in the junior high school is desirable, but it is recommended that it supplement the interscholastic program, rather than replace it. Knapp and Combes²² state that:

1. All boys should be given an opportunity to learn and to play the game.
2. Playing facilities should be shared equally by all of the boys.
3. Instruction and coaching should be shared equally by all.

²⁰Weber, Op. Cit., p. 106.

²¹Joseph F. Zaleski, "We Have to Win," NEA Journal, XLIII (October, 1953), p. 418-20.

²²Clyde Knapp and Harry Combes, "Basketball for Elementary School Boys," The Athletic Journal, XXX (January, 1950), p. 51-2.

4. "Lead-up" games and activities that develop skills in ball-manipulation and ball control should be stressed for younger boys.
5. Stimulation of natural interest in playing, rather than artificial stimulation toward a high degree of specialization that tends to limit participation in other physical activities should be stressed for elementary school boys.
6. Participation for all, or most of the boys, through class, recreational, and intramural activities should be given priority in allotting time, facilities, and teaching personnel.
7. Interscholastic programs, if deemed advisable in local situations, should represent only the peak of a pyramid which has for its base, basketball experience for all or most of the boys in class situations; and for its mid-section, basketball for the many recreational and intramural activities.

An argument against the intramural program is that the teams are not usually as well equipped as school teams. Also, they are not as well taught, nor do they learn the skills, or face situations of a similar nature. With everyone taking part with different ranges of ability, many of the benefits of good coaching are lost. The officials who work these games are not always qualified and do not always understand the characteristics of boys of this age. Many of the contests are not controlled properly from the standpoint of the players and the spectators. It is hard to get qualified people to help with the program willingly at the time the games must be held.²³

²³Shepard and Jamerson, Op. Cit., p. 239.

Combination of Intramurals and Interscholastic Athletics.

Another type of program used in some junior high schools is a combination of intramurals and interscholastic athletics. A program of this nature is largely on the intramural basis with only few interscholastic games involved, usually at the close of the season. Usually the best boys on the intramural teams are selected to represent the school in interscholastic contests. A program of this type may be worked out in cities or where there are a few small towns close together.

Intramural sports, during or after school hours, are good for a number of educational reasons. One of the most important is that youngsters are given an opportunity to make use of the skills they have learned in their regular instructional periods. Class periods alone are usually not frequent enough or long enough to provide anything like adequate practice of what has been learned.²⁴

The needs of all youngsters for instruction and frequent participation should be met before superior ones are singled out for additional instruction and extra participation, either within the school or between schools.

By selecting boys of superior ability to compete against other boys of superior ability, an incentive is provided for the boys to go all out and see what their capabilities really are. Such games also permit participation as a reward for achieving superior

²⁴Wear, Op. Cit., p. 79.

skill and gives boys the beneficial social experience of matching skill and wit against strangers in a sportsmanlike manner.²⁵

Some have contended that interscholastic athletic programs detract or may even eliminate intramurals in the schools. In the latest survey²⁶ of junior high schools in the United States, seven out of ten reported that interscholastic athletics stimulated their intramural program. Three out of ten reported that the programs detract from each other. Since it is evident that in many cases interscholastic programs do stimulate intramural programs, it must be concluded that wherever intramurals are curtailed, eliminated, or are not a part of the school program, it is not the fault of interscholastic athletics per se but rather that of the leadership within the school.

Most schools require some type of scholastic achievement in order to participate in interscholastic athletics, and some even have requirements for intramural athletics. However, Gruhn and Douglass²⁷ take the view that, "The educational values of competitive sports are too great to deprive pupils of participation merely because they fall short in scholastic achievement."

The basis for an interscholastic program in the junior high school should be competition to improve rather than competition

²⁵Ibid., p. 79.

²⁶Creighton J. Hale, "What Research Says About Athletics for Pre-High School Age Children," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, XXX (December, 1959), p. 21.

²⁷William T. Gruhn and Harl R. Douglass, The Modern Junior High School, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1947), p. 373.

to prove.²⁸ If this is a correct assumption, that there should be competition to improve rather than competition to prove, there must be a strong intramural program for all students. If there is a strong intramural program and the interscholastic program comes as a result of the intramural program, the program could be on a sound basis.²⁹

A strong intramural program along with a well-rounded interscholastic athletic program would be the ideal plan. Since, however, only a few schools would be able to provide such a program, due mainly to inadequate facilities, money, and personnel, the writer did not discuss this type of program at length. The writer does believe that whatever type of program a school does have, their aim should be to develop the strongest possible intramural program and interscholastic athletic program together.

III. LITERATURE CONCERNING THE PROGRAM AS A FEEDER SYSTEM

In many instances the junior high school interscholastic athletic programs were installed as a feeder system to supply the local high school with athletic talent. In general, the objective was to assist individuals to learn the skills of the game, to become adjusted to organized practice sessions, and to receive

²⁸Franklin P. Hanson, "Should the Junior High School Have an Interscholastic Athletic Program?" National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, XLIII, (April, 1959), p. 16-7.

²⁹Ibid., p. 16-7.

experience in interscholastic contests.

Many coaches believe that the best method for using the junior high school program as a feeder system is to organize it very similar to the senior high school program. Some coaches, after the program is established, leave the rest up to the junior high coach. They consider any activity on this basis as beneficial to the high school program. Others insist that their ideas be carried out in the junior high program. Their method of practice, teaching skills, systems of offense and defense, must be instituted at the earliest possible date.

Other high school coaches go along with the idea of having a good intramural program. Many of them contend that the boys who excel in junior high school are those who are the farthest advanced physically. In interscholastic athletic programs, only the few boys who make the first team get the benefit of competing, while in intramurals, everyone gets an equal chance. It is the belief of Knapp and Combes³⁰ that:

At school levels below the ninth grade, a program of physical education and intramurals provides the best means of tapping the basketball resources of a community as well as serving to develop boys physically and socially. Without believing for a minute that elementary school sports can be justified on the basis of "feeding" competent athletes to high school teams, the writers do believe that attention to sports for all provides not only the best answer to the need for educationally sound experiences in that area, but also provides the best basis for the development of competent athletes for high school teams.

³⁰Knapp and Combes, op. cit., p. 51.

One of the chief contributions of the junior high school interscholastic athletic program to the senior high school program, according to many coaches, is its organized practice sessions. They claim boys coming to them from these programs are much easier to control. The boys seem to show more attention and follow instructions much better. This also includes boys who had only basketball programs in junior high school and then compete only in football in senior high school.

IV. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR AN INTERSCHOLASTIC PROGRAM

In those communities where local School Boards of Education adopt an interscholastic athletic program on the junior high school level, certain principles should be followed. First of all, the program should provide educational experiences for the participants rather than producing winning teams and providing entertainment for spectators. It would be better if there were no publicity and no awards given. It should not interrupt any part of the school day with practice sessions or pep meetings. All games should be played immediately after school hours. In cases where school buses are not available right after school for athletic purposes, the game should be played as early as possible. A team should not travel more than twenty-five miles for any game. The team should be coached by a certified physical education teacher who is interested in the boys physical and mental welfare and not just in winning

games.³¹

Before a boy is permitted to participate in any part of the interscholastic program, he should pass a strict physical examination. Also, in case of any prolonged or serious sickness, he should have another physical examination in order to resume participation. The practice sessions should be carefully planned and conducted and should not last longer than ninety minutes including dressing before and after practice.

In case of serious injury, a doctor should be called immediately. If a minor injury occurs, the boy should be treated promptly and then have the injury checked each day until properly healed. A limit of one interscholastic game a week should be the rule with a time limit set, depending on the game. All games should be officiated by registered officials.³²

At the close of each season the school should look back and review the educational outcomes. In many cases adjustments should be made to better the program. The best possible program for everyone involved should be the goal of all schools.

The opponents and the proponents of interscholastic athletics in junior high schools are in general agreement on four basic points:

1. They agree that the sedentary habits of living associated with our mechanized society may seriously impair the fitness of American Youth, and that the schools should contribute to the opportunities provided for participation in vigorous physical activities.

³¹Louis E. Alley, "Junior High Interscholastic Athletics," NEA Journal, L (May, 1961), p. 10-13.

³²Ibid., p. 10-13.

2. They agree that all youngsters can profit -- educationally, as well as physically -- from participation in competitive athletic activities appropriate to their age group.
3. They agree that to provide opportunities for all youngsters to profit from participation in athletic activities of a competitive nature, the school must provide adequate programs of required physical education, intramurals, and recreational activities of a physical nature.
4. They agree that athletic competition for youth should be carefully supervised and controlled, and that every effort should be extended to ensure that competition provides a safe, educational experience.³³

In developing a program of athletic activities, the problem facing those responsible for the conduct of interscholastic programs for boys in junior high schools appears to be that of placing primary emphasis on providing educational experiences for the participants, rather than feeding the high school coaches with athletic talent due to local or area pressure on them.

The writer could find very limited material on the value of junior high school athletics through the feeder system program. Also, each local school system appears to have its own views as to the value and set-up of the feeder system in the junior high school as preparation for the senior high school athletic program.

³³Ibid., p. 10-13.

CHAPTER III
STUDY OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

The writer made a survey of the Teutopolis Junior High School and the Effingham Junior High School interscholastic athletic programs. The objective was to see if athletic skill and success in the Junior high school program was comparable to success in the senior high school program.

I. THE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM AT TEUTOPOLIS
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The interscholastic athletic program at the Teutopolis Junior High School consists of a basketball program only. The school is a member of the Tri-County-Elementary Conference and participates only in basketball while most of the other schools in the conference also participate in track.

The program includes grades 6, 7, and 8. The usual practice procedure is to practice daily after school for approximately ninety minutes. The regular school day ends at 3:30 P. M. and the boys are dismissed at 5:00 P. M. because many parents wish to pick up their boys, as some live on the farm. Not all boys practice daily because of the limited facilities available for practice. The eighth grade usually practices four nights a week, the seventh grade three nights a week, and the sixth grade two nights a week.

These practices begin approximately on October 15, and end with the last game of the season which is usually around February 15.

The facilities that are used are not the best by any means. Practices are held on the second floor of the school building. It consists of just a floor with the dimensions of 90 feet by 48 feet, of which the playing floor is 72 feet by 39 feet. There are only two baskets for use and they must be utilized to the fullest extent. The average number of basketballs used is six to eight. These balls were previously used by the high school, but are still in fairly good condition. There is only one dressing room with three showers, to be used after practice. This necessitates close supervision. The boys must furnish their own practice equipment.

The schedule usually consists of from ten to twelve games. These games are played against only conference schools except on rare occasions. The team is also entered in the conference tournament. A school bus is used for all out-of-town games with only the basketball squad making the trip. The home games are played in the high school gym which has all of the facilities needed. Registered IHSA officials are used to work all the conference games.

At the end of the season a trophy is awarded to the team winning the conference championship. A first, second, and third place trophy is also awarded to the teams that place in that particular order during the tournament.

At the Teutopolis Junior High School no awards are given of any kind for participating in the basketball program. However, at the close of the season, the boys attend the all-sports banquet

which is held in honor of all athletes in the school unit. The boys are introduced and a few short comments are made on the performance of the team during the season.

The following survey was taken of three Teutopolis eighth grade classes. The purpose was to find out if the boys who participated in the junior high school program went on and participated in the senior high school program. The number of games "played-in", was used to get an idea as to what extent they played; the number of points scored was used to try to determine the success they achieved. The writer does not believe that scoring points is a good method to measure success, but no other statistics were available to measure success.

TABLE I
A REPORT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF BASKETBALL
PLAYERS IN THE TEUTOPOLIS UNIT
1954-1959

Name	Junior High		Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points
M. Hewing	15	202	5	22	14	48	12	100	14	176
K. Esker	15	35	--	--	3	1	--	--	--	--
R. Esker	10	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
G. Hoene	14	16	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
L. Hardiek	15	44	--	--	11	14	9	33	25	129

TABLE II
A REPORT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF BASKETBALL
PLAYERS IN THE TEUTOPOLIS UNIT
1955-1960

Name	Junior High		Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points
T. Kroeger	18	103	--	--	--	--	28	193	1	--
R. Ruholl	14	109	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
D. Funneman	16	78	10	52	21	97	28	277	28	365
D. Woerman	18	72	--	--	5	14	24	66	30	99
T. Barnes	17	77	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
F. Gardewine	18	61	--	--	10	38	28	283	30	319
J. Hotze	18	52	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
J. Jansen	17	15	Moved to a different school district							
E. Hardiek	--	--	--	--	3	12	24	94	30	199
B. Repking	--	--	--	--	6	17	16	44	26	104

TABLE III
A REPORT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF BASKETBALL
PLAYERS IN THE TEUTOPOLIS UNIT
1956-1961

Name	Junior High		Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points
J. Runde	16	208	19	141	21	341	30	534	28	524
T. Brumleve	16	153	1	---	10	38	26	90	28	366
J. Gier	16	89	--	---	10	97	29	329	28	275
J. Griffin	16	90	--	---	--	--	13	24	26	91
J. Fuesting	16	4	--	---	--	--	12	10	2	1
E. Bergfeld	16	66	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--
J. Fearday	16	17	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--
L. Vahling	16	0	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--
R. Ordner	16	0	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--
J. Wente	--	--	--	---	--	--	14	35	21	109

II. THE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM AT EFFINGHAM

The interscholastic athletic program at Effingham Junior High School consists of basketball and track. The school is a member of the Little Eight Conference and participates in both basketball and track.

The interscholastic athletic program includes grades 7 and 8. Practices are held daily for approximately ninety minutes. A head coach is employed to coach grade 8 and an assistant coach handles grade 7. The sixth grade takes part in an intramural basketball program. They practice two or three nights each week in the evenings. On Saturdays, they play their intramural schedule. The boys in grades 7 and 8 who do not take part in the interscholastic program have an intramural program on two days a week during the noon hour.

The facilities at Effingham Junior High School are very adequate for the program. They have their own gym with two large shower rooms. They also have adequate equipment of their own, but do use the high school track for practice whenever it is available to them. The gym is large, with a regulation playing floor and seating capacity for spectators of approximately 700. There are five baskets for use during practice.

The schedule usually consists of twelve to fifteen games played chiefly against conference teams. They also enter the conference and the county tournaments. A school bus is used

TABLE IV

A REPORT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF BASKETBALL
PLAYERS IN THE EFFINGHAM UNIT

1955-1960

[illegible]

TABLE V
A REPORT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF BASKETBALL
PLAYERS IN THE EFFINGHAM UNIT
1956-1961

Name	Junior High		Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points	Games	Points
Grieder	14	19	--	--	--	--	15	78	3	0
Ramsey	14	114	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ziegler	15	64	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Dolbow	14	60	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Stortzum	14	57	--	--	--	--	8	27	3	14
Foley	15	43	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Winchester	7	16	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Donaldson	--	--	--	--	8	9	5	15	8	24
Davis	--	--	--	--	5	13	19	162	2	2
Owens	--	--	--	--	--	--	19	39	21	156

In evaluating the study of the Teutopolis Junior High School and the Effingham Junior High School interscholastic programs, the writer noted that athletic skill and success in the junior high school program was not comparable to success in the senior high school program.

The limited facilities, participation, and schedule at Teutopolis Junior High School, in contrast with the very adequate facilities, broader participation and schedule at Effingham Junior High School, did not show any significant difference in the measurement of success in the senior high school programs.

The survey taken by the writer indicated that those students who did have considerable success in junior high school athletics did not necessarily follow through on the high school level. Also, those students who did not achieve success in junior high school athletics did not experience appreciable success in senior high school athletics. There were, of course, some students who did have success in junior high school athletics, did progress, and did meet with expected success in the senior high school.

On the basis of evidence presented, no prediction could be made as to the success of the junior high school player in senior high school.

CHAPTER IV

PROPOSALS FOR A SOUND JUNIOR-HIGH ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Many junior high schools are currently re-evaluating their athletic activities, and others are in beginning stages of developing an athletic program. What the athletic program at the junior high-school level embodies varies widely among different schools, depending primarily on the educational philosophy of each school. This variation may range from little or no athletic activity, either intramural or interscholastic, to an extensive program in which athletics are over-emphasized in relation to other activities and the educational philosophy of the school. Somewhere between these two extremes, there should be certain concepts which would serve as fundamental guideposts in developing an acceptable program of athletics in the junior high school.³⁴

In order to have a sound interscholastic athletic program for boys in the junior high school, definite contributions should be made to the educational objectives of the school. These should include:

1. The program should provide educational experiences for the participants rather than on producing winning teams and providing entertainment for the student body.
2. Practice sessions should be after school and not during physical education classes and study periods.

³⁴Ralph R. Lester, "What Kind of Athletic Program in the Junior High School?", National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, XLII, (April 1958), p. 134.

3. The contests, when at all possible, should be held immediately after school or on Saturday morning, rather than at night.
4. The members of the teams should be required to demonstrate good citizenship and sportsmanship at all contests.³⁵

The interscholastic athletic program for boys in the junior high school should supplement the physical education and intramural program. It should be noted that:

1. A daily period of physical education should be provided for all boys and a wide variety of activities should be taught.
2. A well-rounded program of intramural sports should be provided for all boys.
3. If the school has a shortage of facilities, equipment or personnel with professional training in physical education, then the physical education and intramural program should take precedence over the interscholastic athletic program.³⁶

The interscholastic athletic program for boys in junior high school should be conducted by men with adequate professional training in physical education. It is essential that:

1. The coaches of the team should be members of the regular school staff, and have regular teaching duties in addition to coaching.
2. The coaches should be teachers of physical education.
3. The coaches should have a complete knowledge of the sports that they coach.
4. The coaches should have a knowledge of child growth and development, the effects of exercise on the human organism, and first aid.

³⁵Louis E. Alley, "Interscholastic Athletics for Junior High School Boys," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLIV (May, 1960), p. 99-100.

³⁶Ibid., p. 99-100.

5. The coach should have definite policies concerning the place and purposes of interscholastic athletics in the educational program.³⁷

The interscholastic athletic program for boys in the junior high school should consider the physical welfare of the individual before anything else. It is recommended that:

1. Every boy should be given a thorough medical examination by a physician prior to participation in the sport. After an extended period of illness, another medical examination should be required.
2. The boys should be furnished with complete, well-fitted protective equipment.
3. The boys should be matched according to height, weight, and maturity in order to compete safely and successfully.
4. A definite policy regarding legal and financial responsibilities for injuries should be formulated.
5. A period of three weeks for conditioning and training should be required prior to competition.
6. There should be a definite length of the playing season and the number of games played during the season, with no tournaments as the rule.
7. A physician should be present during all games in case of serious injuries.
8. Registered officials should be engaged to officiate all contests.
9. The distance travelled should be limited to about thirty miles one way.³⁸

³⁷Ibid., p. 99-100.

³⁸Ibid., p. 99-100.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problem facing those responsible for the conduct of interscholastic programs for boys in junior high schools seems to be that of conducting the program in such a manner that the educational purposes of the school are served. To accomplish this, definite principles should be set up and followed. In developing a program of athletic activities for the junior high schools, a prime requirement is to provide opportunities for all students to participate.

In those junior high schools in which adequate programs of required physical education, intramurals, and physical recreation are provided for all students, a limited program of interscholastic athletics provides additional opportunities for boys with superior athletic ability to fully develop and utilize their talent. Such programs, should be organized and conducted in accordance with the educational purposes of the school in mind.

The survey taken by the writer seems to bear out the fact that those students who did not have success in junior high school athletics did not experience appreciable success in senior high school athletics. Some students who did achieve skill and success in junior high school athletics still did not follow through on the high school level. This could be due to other possible conditions, such as the students quitting school, or developing other interests, or not wanting to make the sacrifices necessary in order to stay on

the high school squad. In some cases, boys missed a few games in high school because of injuries.

The writer believes that a limited program of interscholastic athletics in the junior high school, when properly organized, can make a significant contribution to youth fitness, and recommends that school authorities established procedures which will allow these activities to be carried on with due consideration for safety, maturity, and the proper growth and development of the individual. The junior high school athletic program should call for more informality and more variety in junior high school athletics than now prevail, and should involve more students.

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